

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
PRS-01 /052 W
-----141305Z 123124 /66

R 131147Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3401
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3401

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, EG, XF, PDEV, PFOR
SUBJECT: MAYOR SHAWWA FUSSES WITH ISRAELIS OVER ELECTRICITY, WATER

REF: A. TEL AVIV 3363
B. TEL AVIV 2922

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH MAYOR SHAWWA MAY 11, EMBOFF
NOTED THAT LIGHTS IN MAYOR'S OFFICE WERE STILL LIT
DESPITE A MAY 2 DEADLINE FOR POWER-CUT UNLESS THE
MUNICIPALITY PAID ITS ACCUMULATED VAT DEBTS (REF B,
PARA 4) THE MAYOR DESCRIBED A HEATED DISCUSSION HE
HAD WITH A MILITARY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL UPON HIS RETURN
FROM AMMAN LAST WEEK, IN WHICH HE SUMMED UP HIS POSITION
BY TELLING THE ISRAELI TO GO AHEAD AND CUT THE POWER,
AND THEN AFTERWARDS TRY AND EXPLAIN TO THE WORLD WHY
HE SHUT OFF ELECTRICITY TO A CITY OF 250,000 PEOPLE
BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL TO PAY TAXES WHICH ARE ILLEGAL
ACCORDING TO THE GENEVA CONVENTION. THE MAYOR
HAD CONCEDED THE POINT THAT GAZA PAYS VAT ON EVERY-
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THING BUT ELECTRICITY, BUT STEADFASTLY REFUSED TO
GIVE IN ON THIS ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE. WHEN THE
OFFICIAL ASKED HOW THE PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED,
THE MAYOR HAD FINALLY SUGGESTED THAT THE MUNICIPALITY
COULD BE SAVED ITS PRINCIPLES AND THE ISRAELIS THEIR
EMBARRASSMENT IF THE MILGOV DEDUCTED THE AMOUNT FROM
THE BUDGETARY SUPPORT EH GOI GRANTS THE MUNICIPALITY.

THIS IS PROBABLY HOW THE ISRAELIS WILL HANDLE THE MATTER, THE MAYOR THOUGHT. AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT HE ADDED THAT THE POWER HAD GONE OFF ON MAY 2, THE DEADLINE DAY, BUT HAD COME BACK ON AFTER FIVE MINUTES.

2. THE MAYOR WAS ALSO EXERCISED WITH THE ISRAELIS OVER THEIR USE OF GAZA STRIP WATER. HE CITED PERSISTENT RUMORS, WHICH HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO VERIFY SHORTLY, THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE SUNK THREE DEEP ARTESIAN WELLS (FOR THEIR SETTLEMENTS IN THE STRIP) WHICH EACH DRAW 600 CUBIC METERS PER HOUR. (COMMENT: THIS WOULD AMOUNT TO FIFTEEN AND ONE-HALF MILLION CUBIC METERS ANNUALLY, WHICH SEEMS A HIGH AND DOUBTFUL FIGURE.) THE MAYOR HAS OBJECTED STRONGLY TO THE ISRAELIS OVER THE IMPOSITION OF WATER RESTRICTIONS ON GAZANS ("THEY WON'T EVEN LET ME REPLANT TWELVE DUNAMS OF CITRUS AND CONTINUE TO USE WATER I AM NOW USING."). FROM THE MAYOR'S VIEWPOINT, THE ISRAELIS HAVE COME INTO THE GAZA STRIP AND ARE USING GAZA'S WATER WHILE CUTTING BACK ON WHAT THE GAZANS THEMSELVES CAN USE.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP A PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED CASUAL COMMENT TO EMBOFF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO BY THE MFA REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORIES (GONEN) TAKES ON ADDED SIGNIFICANCE. GONEN SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE SHORTAGE OF GAZA STRIP WATER BECOMES A PUBLIC ISSUE WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS.

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 13-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Remarks:
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